

Dinner With My Family

My family doesn't sit together too often. We are always busy doing something else. My brother, Shahzad, goes to college now, and only comes home every few weeks. My dad arrives home from work late at night, when my sisters are sometimes already in bed. One of the few times we are together at dinner is when we go out to a restaurant to eat.

We often go to a restaurant called Kabab King. It is a great place and my family loves the food there. It isn't very roomy, but is still a nice place for a family to go. Mirrors surround the walls and ceiling fans hang from above. When we get there, we are seated and then spend five minutes arguing about what to order. We finally decide on what to get, and tell the waiter. I usually order chicken kababs and a lot of pita bread. My dad always tells me that I won't be able to finish the food, so I take him up on the challenge. As we wait for dinner, I twirl the plate in front of me and play with my knife and spoon on the table. My siblings and I joke around and get to talk about what's on our minds. We sometimes play the three-headed monster game where we each take turns saying one word to eventually form a sentence. The game usually starts off with one of our names.

After the long-awaited food arrives, we all attack. I continue to talk with my brother, while my sister gets mad at me for being too loud. We munch on kababs, pita bread and curry, and then realize what we've ordered isn't going to be enough. We tell the waiter what else we want, and continue to eat. After a while everyone is thirsty, but we've forgotten to order drinks! Again, the waiter goes to the back to get some soda and water. This goes on for a while, until we are all full. Then my dad pays the bill, and I walk out of the restaurant limping because of a pain in my stomach from eating too much. In the car on the way home, I sit with my mom. My stomach is full, and I am happy. I look out the window while listening to my brother being screamed at by my dad for driving too fast.

—Jawwad Asghar, 15, New York.

A Sunday Dinner

My family is both funny and fun. On Sundays, we all get together. The men usually watch football and the women make food for the dinner. We are Italian. On Sundays, we eat early in the afternoon. When dinner is ready, we all go to our seats, the same ones every week. My Grandpa gets the head of the table because he is the "boss." My mom and dad sit on the left side of the table with my sister. On the right side, it's my Grandma, my Uncle John and me.

Italians eat what seems like a big dinner to an average family, but we usually eat pasta in small portions. It's a first course. On the table there are two baskets of bread with a little butter. There is red wine if we eat meats or white wine if fish is on the table. Also, we eat many different types of vegetables like string beans, baked potatoes and salad.

As we eat, we talk about how the week has gone. Usually my uncle tells funny stories about Joe Spinach or about Gino, who works for Grandpa at the chain pizzerias that we own. My Grandpa talks about the way the pizzeria business is going. He explains which days are busy and slow. My dad talks about how his pizza shop was busy or slow that week or about his customers.

Then when we are done we watch some more football until coffee is ready. At last comes dessert time. I stay and watch football while the adults are in the kitchen sipping on their espresso and eating some Italian desserts that include cannoli and some white cookies with powdered sugar on top.

When the kitchen is all cleaned up, the women go to the mall to look around and the men stay home watching football. When they come home they show us what they bought, which could be a shirt for me or something for my Dad or Grandpa. They never buy anything for themselves, just for others.

This is my typical Sunday where the family gets together and talks about how the week went. I love it. I can't wait until next week.

—Sam Policicchio, 15, New York.

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